

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 7, 10 and 18 without prejudice, and please amend claim 1 to recite the features thereof.

Please also amend claims 2 to 6, 8 to 9, 11 to 17, and 19 to 24, as follows.

A Marked-Up Version of Amended Claims is attached hereto.

1. (Amended) A procedure to create a fleece (44) made of fibers (14) with numerous hole structures (36) extending over the entire cross-section of the fleece (44) comprising:

- in a first step, the fibers (14) are randomly placed on a perforated belt (16) to form a fibrous web (18),
- in a second step, the fibrous web (18) is transported to a hole-structure-creating unit (20; 20a),
- the hole-structure-creating unit (20; 20a) is a calendar having two rollers (22, 26; 40a) with facing surfaces (24, 28; 28a) between which the fibrous web (18) is guided, whereby the surface (24) of a first roller has numerous barbs (30) facing the fibrous web (18, and whereby the surface (28; 28a) of a second roller (26; 40a) has openings (32, 32a) in which the barbs (3) of

the first surface (24) can at least partially enter, whereby the fibers (14) of the fibrous web (18) below the barbs (30) are displaced without being destroyed when the barbs (30) sink into the openings (32; 32a) and the hole structures (36) are formed without a heat treatment or simultaneous compression,

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-in a third step, the hole structures (36) are created by mechanically displacing the fibers (14), whereby the displacement of the fibers (14) does not influence their mechanical and chemical structure, and

-in a fourth step, directly after creating the hole structure, the fibrous web (18) with the hole structures (36) is bonded in a calender roller arrangement (38; 38a) to form a fleece (44).

2. (Amended) A procedure according to claim 1, wherein the fibrous web (18) is transformed by stiffening and thermobonding to form a fleece (44).

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3. (Amended) A procedure according to claim 2, wherein before the third step, the fibrous web (18) is prebonded so that the tensile strength of the prebonded fibrous web (18) is 0.1 to

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75% and especially 50% of the tensile strength of the bonded  
fleece (4).

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4. (Twice Amended) A procedure according to claim 1,  
wherein the fibers (14) surrounding the hole structures (36) are  
fixed before feeding the fibrous web (18) to the bonding unit  
(38; 38a).

5. (Twice Amended) A procedure according to claim 1,  
wherein the fibrous web (18) is fed directly to the bonding unit  
(38; 38a) after the hole structure (36) is created.

6. (Amended) A procedure according to claim 5, wherein the  
fourth step directly follows the third step.

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8. (Amended) A procedure according to claim 1, wherein the  
openings (32; 32a) of the second surface (28; 28a) communicate  
with a vacuum source (34) so that fibers (14) of the fibrous web  
(18) in the area of the openings (32; 32a) are sucked into the  
openings (32; 32a).

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9. (Amended) A procedure according to claim 1, wherein the openings (32; 32a) of the second surface (28; 28a) communicate with a pressure source (34) so that fibers (14) of the fibrous web (18) in the area of the openings (32; 32a) are blown out of the openings (32; 32a).

11. (Amended) A procedure according to claim 1, wherein the roller (22) has a diameter of 100-500 mm.

12. (Twice Amended) A procedure according to claim 1, wherein the first element (22) is a lowering and raising plate.

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13. (Twice Amended) A procedure according to claim 1, wherein the barbs (30) of the first element (22) are conical.

14. (Twice Amended) A procedure according to claim 1, wherein the barbs (30) have an involuted shaped.

15. (Twice Amended) A procedure according to claim 1, wherein the barbs (30) have an ogival cross-section.

16. (Twice Amended) A procedure according to claim 1,  
wherein the barbs are 0.5-5 mm high.

17. (Twice Amended) A procedure according to claim 1,  
wherein the second element (26) is a perforated belt (26).

19. (Twice Amended) A fleece (44) created according to a  
procedure in claim 1, wherein the hole structures (36) have a  
diameter of 0.5-5 mm.

20. (Amended) A fleece according to claim 19, wherein the  
bonding surface is 3-40% of the fleece surface.

21. (Twice Amended) A fleece according to claim 19, wherein  
the number of bonding points (48) is 20-120 per square  
centimeter.

22. (Twice Amended) A fleece according to claim 19, wherein  
the shape of the hole structures (36) is noncircular.

23. (Twice Amended) A fleece according to claim 19, wherein the distance between individual hole structures (36) is irregular.

24. (Twice Amended) A fleece (44) manufactured according to claim 1, wherein the fibrous web (18) is bonded to at least one other sheet medium before creating the hole structures (36).

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REMARKS

Reconsideration of this patent application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

The amendments to this patent application are as follows. The Specification has been amended on page 2 thereof to cancel the bottom two lines thereof which refer to "claim 1."

The amendments to the claims are to cancel claims 7, 10 and 18 without prejudice, and to amend claim 1 to include the features thereof. Also claims 2 to 6, 8 to 9, 11 to 17, and 19 to 24 have been amended to include minor revisions thereto. The